

Power and violence over the female body in Czechoslovakia: social and medical practices of birth-giving

This project aims to take the case of birth-giving as one case study of practices of domination and violence under communism. On the basis of oral history interviews, archival and bibliographical research, it will attempt to sketch the relationship and interaction between the woman (her child, her partner, her family) and the state (decision makers, doctors, midwives, other medical personnel) primarily within the medical institution of the gynecological/obstetrical practice and the maternity hospital. By establishing comparisons with another Central-European, but not communist, country (Austria) and with a non-Central European, non-communist country (France), and by simultaneously extending the study to post-communist Czech Republic, this study will try to establish if there was a specific communist approach to gender, to the body, to medical practice, and to reproduction, as well as contribute to the history of everyday life under communist Czechoslovakia and post-communist Czech Republic.